



The Virginia Saltwater Review

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by

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OVERVIEW



Happy Labor Day weekend! As we go to print, eyewitness accounts tell us the Bay is more than a bit 'bumpy' in places, and the forecast for the weekend has many of those words that small craft don't like to hear, such as north and northeast winds.



This weekend also marks the unofficial end of summer, and though the recent cool spell and, at times, blustery conditions has limited some anglers, there are still plenty of fishing opportunities to take advantage of. Inshore, croaker catches are increasing in size, and the fall spot run is starting to appear. Flounder, cobia, and puppy drum (juvenile red drum) have been available around the area, and speckled trout are still keeping anglers happy. Offshore, the big news is the sailfish!!! Huge numbers of sailfish have been reported from offshore anglers in recent weeks. With all of that excitement, some might forget to mention the catches of blue and white marlin and dolphin that are also available. By shore, pier, or boat, if you have the chance, get out and fish this weekend.

REMINDER: THE SALTWATER REVIEW WILL NOT BE PRODUCED NEXT WEEK, SEPTEMBER 11 (PATRIOT DAY), BUT WILL RETURN ON SEPTEMBER 18.

THE FISHING REPORT

Chincoteague

Donna, at Captain Bob's marina, reported a 3.75-pound citation croaker caught in Chincoteague waters last week. Overall, between hurricane threats, high winds, and rough seas, it was a slow week in Chincoteague. The Inlet View Campground pier continued to produce keeper flounder on the incoming tide, and there were also reports of keeper flounder popping up in the Gargatha area, about 30 miles south of Chincoteague. Offshore, 13 false albacore and one mahi mahi were brought in by one boat last weekend.

Onancock

Slow fishing out of Onancock was reported this week by Captain Wil. Croaker and a few spot were around. A few flounder were caught as well as some sea mullet and a few bluefish.

Wachapreague

Staff at the Wachapreague Marina reported that croaker were still around, despite recent storms. There are two groups of croaker available, in a large and small size range. The best spots have been Seal Creek and Braford's Channel. Numerous undersized flounder were found in the area as well as near the 1st island in Burton's Bay at the Hummocks Channel. A few grey trout caught at the Little Y channel last week as well.

Cape Charles

At Chris' Bait and Tackle, croaker was found near Oyster, and flounder were spotted by the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Before the wind picked up, cobia and red drum were caught near Buoys 16 and 13.

It was a slow weekend at the Cherrystone Campground, so there was little fishing activity reported at Cherrystone Bait and Tackle. Decent-sized croaker were found around the area by those that did venture out.

Captain Ray Cardone, of Cherrystone, reported a really nice week for croaker catches. Over 100 were reported in one trip. These fish have improved in both numbers and size over recent weeks.

Lower Bay/Bridge Tunnel

While no citations were reported this week from Cobb's Marina, there were reports of flounder and cobia at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel islands.

Several citations were reported by the Sunset Boating Center. A 53-inch cobia was released from the York Spit, and, a 52-inch cobia release citation was reported, and two flounder (21 and 24 inches) were also reported.

The York River Fishing Center reported an 11-pound, 7-ounce citation flounder this week from Buoy 42. While the poor weather kept most of the cobia fishing to a minimum, other anglers had luck with the recent surge of spot in the York River. Sarah's Creek has been a particular hot spot this week. Nice croaker, spot, and small flounder were picked up from the Gloucester Pier, and puppy drum and speckled trout have begun to bite along the shoreline.

Ken Neill, of the Peninsula Anglers Club and IGFA representative, contributed the following:

A stiff northeast blow is usually a good time to stay on land for a few days; however, some anglers are taking advantage of the first good northeast blow and will be setting up on hills throughout the lower bay expecting some of the best cobia fishing of the year. Prior to this week's little breeze,

cobia fishing has been very good. Anglers are finding fish staging on buoys, catching them on chum slicks, and sight-casting to cruising fish in open waters. These open water fish are not the singles and doubles we have been seeing all summer. Some of these pods are as large as 20 to 30 fish. They do not spook as easily, and they compete with each other for any eel you lob in front of them. This blow signals the beginnings of some other great fisheries. We have had a pretty good spot bite all summer, and it should get better now. Sea mullet fishing along the surf and around the shoals will be even better than it has been previously. Flounder fishing is usually very good during the month of September, and the channel edges near the mouth of the bay and along the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel will be good areas. However, it is usually a few days after a northeast blow before the water will clear up for a good flatfish bite. Speckled trout and puppy drum fishing will really turn on now as the water cools a bit. Specks up to 6 pounds have been caught this past week inside of Back River. Large red drum are available around the islands of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel and around the shoals at the mouth of the bay. Amberjack fishing remains very good at the South Tower. This should be the month for some large jack crevalle to show at the Chesapeake Light Tower. Spanish mackerel fishing remains very good along the oceanfront out to the Chesapeake Light Tower. Offshore, expect to have a very good white marlin bite after a northeast blow. The concern is that fishing was already very good, so we may not want a change. If it is a change for the better, you really want to be out there when this wind lets up. Dolphin and wahoo are being caught along with the occasional tuna. What really has been impressive is the numbers of sailfish being caught. We do not usually catch many sailfish out of Virginia. According to Lewis Gillingham, Director of the Virginia Saltwater Fishing Tournament, the most sailfish release citations registered in any year was 34 in 2002. During this year's Virginia Beach Billfish Tournament, 53 boats, fishing 2 days each, released 160 sailfish.

Dr. Julie Ball, IGFA International Representative for Virginia Beach, contributed the following:

The recent blustery weather is keeping many anglers off the water. And although the muddy water conditions will slow down many summer species, the north easterly wind direction and cooler temperatures will jump start several favorite fall species. The most notable response is from the popular fall pan fish, the Norfolk spot. The recent cold front helped set off the incredible run of spot along the bay's southern shorelines and ocean front. Known for its tasty table fare and ease to hook, the recent influx of big spot is sparking a rush to local fishing piers. The Ocean View Fishing Pier reports that over 200 anglers crowded on the pier daily to partake in almost non-stop action this week. Rudee Inlet is also providing similar action, which can generate a crowd on the jetties.

Red drum also flourish in a north easterly blow. The juvenile variety, puppy drum, are on a craze in shallows, inlets, and creeks, as well as the surf off Dam Neck, while big bulls are joining in the frenzy along the surf lines off Sandbridge and the Eastern Shore barrier islands. Expect the run of big reds off the Little Island Fishing Pier soon. Black drum are tapering off at the four islands as they scatter to head south.

If clear water is pushed closer to shore from the recent blow, it could set off the long awaited king mackerel bite. Kings are also possible around coastal wrecks, and near the Light Tower Reef, where a few snake sized fish are taking trolled lures lately. Nice Spanish mackerel in the 20-inch range are still available around the Chesapeake Light Tower, the CB Line, and the Chesapeake

Bay Bridge Tunnel. False albacore are also showing themselves in some of these same areas under working birds.

Once the waters settle, many anglers will continue to pursue cobia and flounder. The amazing cobia bite is taking on its typical early fall pattern, with many fish schooling on the surface in lower bay waters and along the bridge structures as they prepare to migrate south. Boats are sighting dozens of fish free swimming in singles, pairs, and small pods.

Flounder were behaving again before the cold front set in. Schools of flatfish are assembling along channel edges, shoals, and the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel proper as they prepare to exit the Bay. Drifting along Cape Henry, the Baltimore Channel, and near Buoy 36A is generating keeper-sized fish, with a few doormats mixed in. Anglers targeting fish with live bait and jigs are finding some big fish along the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, with the 1st, and 3rd islands providing the best action. Inshore and nearshore wrecks can also be good places to try right now. Sea bass are becoming more active on inshore wrecks from the Light Tower Reef to the Triangle Wrecks.

Croaker are biting all over the lower bay as long as you can avoid the red tide. Many boats are sitting on decent schools right off Cape Henry. The concrete ships, the 4th island, and the High Rise section of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel are giving up nice fish, with some pushing over 2 pounds. The hardhead action in Oyster was also back on track earlier this week, but the recent blow may finish the trend for the season.

To sheephead hunter's delight, these fish are still going strong. Anglers are taking sheephead from the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel structure on fiddler crabs and clam. The new state leading sheephead will be hard to beat at a whopping 17 pounds, 4 ounces. Trigger fish are still staging in all the same locations, presenting an easy target. Some of these fish are pushing over 4 pounds. Good-sized spadefish were active earlier this week near the third island of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel, where limits of fish ranging from 5 to 7 pounds hit offerings of clam.

Chris' Bait and Tackle reports no action on the tarpon front again this week. Often, the first blow in September will send the silver kings southbound.

The Chesapeake Light Tower can offer a chance at an amberjack, and maybe a jack cravelle. The southern towers and coastal wrecks are also still holding schools of big AJ's. Barracuda are also lurking around the south tower. Deep droppers are still catching limits of nice blueline tilefish when they can get out.

Billfish action was good before the cold front, and should pick up where it left off once boats can get back out. White marlin and scattered blues are still faring well from near the Triple 0's area, with the sailfish still on a roll in the same areas. The best bite lately is still in water ranging from 20 to 70 fathoms. Good gaffer dolphin action is possible under floating debris.

Virginia Middle Bay

Roger, with Jett's Hardware, reports the Spanish mackerel are the news of the week. The numerous fish

are keeping the anglers very happy. Small bluefish are being caught as well by those looking for the mackerel. Flounder are still around the Potomac River jetty, and small spot and croaker are being caught in the channels and deep holes.

Butch, with Garretts' Marina, reports the fishing in the river has been slow. High water temperatures and strong north winds over the past few days have discouraged a lot of anglers from trying, but hopefully, the recent cold front has cooled things off enough to get the fish biting.

Jerry Thrash, of Queen's Creek Outfitters, reported the following:

Cobia continue to bite very well at York Spit and off of New Point Light. Whole menhaden or menhaden chum combined with live croaker or eels are the baits of choice. One cobia release citation was reported this week. Spanish Mackerel fishing continues to be good around Windmill Point and up into Fleets Bay. The creeks and rivers continue to produce keeper spot and croaker. Spot are available off Gwynn's Island, at the Spike (3R), and along the tugboat channel down to New Point. Good-sized sea mullet are scattered in with the spot. Small grey trout have arrived in some numbers in the Piankatank but keepers are few. Speckled trout and puppy drum have picked up this week, particularly around Gwynn's Island. Lots of puppy drum are being seen in grass beds. Getting the fish to strike is a challenge as they are rooting the bottoms. Two speckled trout citations were registered this week—one from the Mobjack area and the other from an undisclosed location.

Virginia Beach

Because the weather was poor, few boats went out of the Virginia Beach Fishing Center last week; however, staff there reported that the inlet is still producing spot, croaker, taylor bluefish, and keeper flounder (the keeper ratio is about 1 in 5). Catch-and-release blacktip shark fishing, as well as some cobia action was reported inshore. Offshore, anglers are reporting HUGE numbers of sailfish. Boats have been reporting as many as 6 hook ups per day. Blue and white marlin have been found as well, and one boat limited out on dolphin last week. Staff at the Fishing Center expects to see wahoo and swordfish action to pick up in the next few weeks along with a nice run of large yellowfin tuna. They are also beginning to think about the upcoming striped bass season.

At Fisherman's Wharf Marina, staff reported that one boat had a grand slam (a blue marlin, a white marlin, and a sailfish) last Monday. Dolphin were also reported.

Virginia Piers

At the Ocean View Pier, nice croaker and puppy drum were caught from the pier. Spot have also been very heavy.

Anglers were catching spot, croaker, sea mullet, a few puppy drum and a few speckled trout at the Lynnhaven Pier last week.

Numerous spot and puppy drum were reported from the Virginia Beach Pier, and Sea mullet and croaker fishing have picked up recently.

At the Buckroe Fishing Pier, Staff reported that the windy and rough conditions made for a slow week. Spot fishing is picking up, and a 1-pound, 2-ounce citation spot was landed last week by an 8-year-old angler.

Outer Banks, NC

Offshore fishing out of Nags Head slowed down over the last week with numbers of dolphin, wahoo, amberjack, and tuna dropping. The billfish bite remained at moderate levels for all three species. Mid-range offshore fishing, approximately 12 miles, produced a few king mackerel for the trollers and triggerfish for the bottom droppers. Nearshore, Spanish mackerel and bluefish catches dropped to almost nothing. Those fishing from shore and the piers saw excellent catches of spot and croaker. Anglers fishing in the sound and inlets had good catches of flounder during the night-time hours, and speckled trout were biting in the early morning.

Surf fishing south of Oregon Inlet has been spotty due to strong winds out of the north east. When the winds were more favorable, the jetties were the place to be with flounder, spot, sea mullet, and puppy drum catches.

Offshore fishing out of Hatteras Inlet was limited due to strong winds all week. Inshore fishing was producing a few puppy drum along with speckled trout and Spanish mackerel.

If you have additional information or would like further details contact Joe Grist at (757) 247-2237. Please credit the Virginia Marine Resources Commission's THE SALTWATER REVIEW as the source of the fishing information.











ATTENTION VIRGINIA SALTWATER ANGLERS!!!

THE VIRGINIA MARINE RESOURCES COMMISSION

***WANTS YOUR FISH....
TO MEASURE AND AGE.***

*You catch it, you fillet it,
but instead of throwing the remains in the trash,
please donate them to science.*

The Marine Sportfish Collection Project will focus on species of fish that are difficult to collect through the agency's normal sampling program. Anglers are asked to donate their filleted carcasses (head and tail intact) of legal and fresh-caught:

COBIA	SHEEPSHEAD	RED DRUM	BLACK DRUM	TAUTOG
				
KING MACKEREL	SPANISH MACKEREL	TILEFISH (BLUELINE OR GOLDEN)	WRECKFISH, SNOWY GROUPER, WARSAW GROUPER	BLUEFISH (GREATER THAN 16 POUNDS OR 36 INCHES)
				

**In return for participating in the project, the agency will provide a
ONE FREE PROJECT TEE SHIRT or HAT, FOR EACH PARTICIPANT,
PER MONTH of the DONATION.**

Please visit these bait and tackle merchants to participate:

**Chris' Bait and Tackle (Capeville)
Long Bay Pointe Marina (Virginia Beach)
Wallace's Bait and Tackle (Hampton)
Buckroe Fishing Pier (Hampton)**



ATTENTION VIRGINIA SALTWATER ANGLERS!!!

Get Hooked!
Report at
www.vasaltwaterjournal.com

The Virginia Marine Resources Commission wants to know about the saltwater fish you caught and if you threw it back or took it home for dinner. How big was it? What species was it? Where did you catch it? This self-reported catch-and-release information will be posted on-line, giving the recreational angler a broader picture of what everyone else is catching -- and where.



The Fisherman's Journal is a tool intended to benefit the individual angler, the fishing community, and fishery managers. It allows individual anglers to keep an easy-to-retrieve record of their successful fishing experiences. It allows the fishing community to share and learn about other anglers' experiences. Finally, it benefits fishery managers by allowing them to assess fish populations by analyzing data provided by you, the recreational fisherman.

You will be able to report catch-and-release ranges, in addition to individual fish kept or released.

On those days that you catch-and-release 50 bluefish, you can just report the number caught and a range of lengths. Reporting individual measurements on more highly prized species -- such as Red Drum, Striped Bass and Flounder -- provides a greater benefit for everyone.

Anglers also may report their fishing trip information, including general location, time of day, weather and water conditions and

type of gear and bait used. This information could be extremely valuable to other anglers to give them an idea of what is caught, where it is caught, and what bait is working on what species.

This self-reporting program will help anglers to become more successful and will provide fishery managers with important anecdotal information on recreational catches. The voluntary on-line reporting system is called the "Saltwater Fisherman's Journal," and is found at www.vasaltwaterjournal.com.

Virginia Marine Resources Commission
Recreational Fishing Online Reporting



**Virginia Recreational
ASSESSMENT PROGRAM**

June 16, 2008
Members: 1,457
Trips: 295
Catches: 3,941

Recreational Saltwater Fishing
Welcome Jgrist,

Red Drum Reports are Needed!

We are collecting length data from red drum that anglers catch-and-release. In 2009, there will be a coastwide (Virginia to Florida) stock assessment of the red drum population, and information is lacking on the catch-and-release of red drum outside of the management slot limit (18 to 26 inches).

New 2008 Tautog Regs

Closed Season	May 1 through June 24
Minimum Size Limit	14 inches
Possession Limit	4 per person

Introducing the Virginia Fishing Line Recycling Program!

- Please help keep our waterways cleaner and safer for:
 - fish
 - birds
 - marine mammals
 - boaters and swimmers
- Deposit used or tangled monofilament fishing line into specially marked containers!



VMRC-Managed

Locations!*

Ocean View Fishing Pier, Norfolk
Long Bay Pointe Marina, Virginia Beach
Buckroe Fishing Pier, Hampton
Chris' Bait and Tackle, Cape Charles
Capt. Bob's Marina, Chincoteague
Wallace's Bait and Tackle, Hampton
Don's Bait and Tackle, Wachapreague



***DGIF manages other locations throughout Virginia**

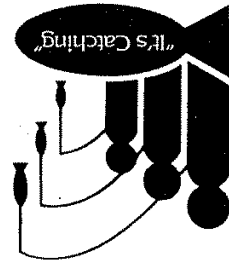
The Virginia Fishing Line Recycling Program is run jointly by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries with support from the Boat US Foundation.

If you have any questions about the program, or suggestions for new container locations, please contact Alicia Nelson at (757) 247-2244 or email alicia.nelson@mrc.virginia.gov.



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Practice

CAREFUL CATCH

REDUCE STRESS FACTORS THAT KILL FISH

Exhaustion * Loss of Slime * Wounds * Time out of Water